

**MINUTES  
CHICOPEE MOBILEHOME RENT CONTROL BOARD  
MARCH 10, 2008 @ 6:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robert Hopkins, Sharyn Riley, Ronald Lafond

**ALSO PRESENT**

Kevin Corridan, Attorney for the Board  
Chantal Paul, Secretary to the Board

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Robert Hopkins:** I apologize for not having a meeting last month due to an illness of a member on the Board. We had no quorum. First order of business is call the meeting to order is to accept the minutes which have not been approved at the last two meetings. First one is November 19, 2007, all members present. Do we have a motion to accept the minutes of November 19, 2007.

**Sharyn Riley:** I make a motion to accept the minutes.

**Ronald Lafond:** I second the motion. *Motion passed unanimously.*

**Robert Hopkins:** Do we have a motion to accept the minutes of January 7, 2008 meeting?

**Sharyn Riley:** I make a motion to accept the minutes of January 7, 2008 meeting.

**Ronald Lafond:** I second the motion. *Motion passed unanimously.*

**Robert Hopkins:** On the agenda tonight we have the Mobilehome Parks, Inc. proposal and since the last meeting we received a couple of correspondence from the tenants and would like to discuss. One person is anonymous and the other is not, one gave us pictures. Marcia, did you receive a copy of this at all?

**Marcia Stemm:** I have not.

**Robert Hopkins:** Okay, I will read them. (Bob reads letters). Ms. Stemm, would you like to take a look at these pictures, to be fair, you haven't seen these.

**Marcia Stemm:** I did not get a copy of that and I thought that the Procedural Rules it says "any information not presented to all parties within the applicable time period will not be admissible at the rent adjustable hearing.

**Robert Hopkins:** This was stamped in February 22<sup>nd</sup> and we haven't had a meeting since. This should have been shared with them earlier, Counselor?

**Kevin Corridan:** It's really at your discretion (inaudible) because of the rules, you need to consider either that its evidence that you're going to take under consideration from (inaudible)

**Robert Hopkins:** Well, because the date that the revised proposal, the actual rent proposal was received on December 14<sup>th</sup> which is why we had to allow tenants to respond.

**Kevin Corridan:** The Rules do state an amount of time but they also state that it is the Chairs discretion to allow for further time.

**Robert Hopkins:** We are aware of the Rules, Ms. Stemm, we are also aware of the option, under the circumstances, to waive those Rules as the Counselor has indicated. Of course, we want this to be fair, of course if would not be fair for you to come in and try to respond to that tonight because you did not have an opportunity to get that. The tenants did not send you a copy?

**Marcia Stemm:** No.

**Robert Hopkins:** I guess my question is has anyone corresponded with you about these conditions prior to what's received? If we want to discuss this as part of our discussion, in all fairness, we cannot make a decision tonight.

**Sharyn Riley:** I don't agree that it should be part of the discussion.

**Ronald Lafond:** I agree.

**Robert Hopkins:** The motion is that the evidence received will not be part of the discussion regarding the rate increase or decrease.

**Tenant:** Why?

**Kevin Corrdian:** Two things, the relevancy of the comments and the requests are more appropriately directed to the Mayor's Office; and second, the time has elapsed for input from both sides, so at the Chair's discretion, he can determine whether or not the evidence or what's been submitted should be heard tonight, and if he decides that than another meeting is required to allow the other side to reply.

**Tenant:** Can you explain to me why this is the Mayor's problem and not the Boards?

**Kevin Corridan:** Those are quality of life issues.

#### **Tenants talk about problems in the park.**

**Robert Hopkins:** I think the issue before is not than one particularly, but if the figures that they have submitted to us seem appropriate and correct in terms of expenditures in the park, are they legitimate expenditures, and of so, should we consider those items that have increased for the amount of \$30.66 to increase the rent to \$231.82 from the current \$201.16, we are only going to be looking at the \$30.66.

**Tenant:** How do you know those figures are correct?

**Robert Hopkins:** These figures are, I presume from your account Ms. Stemm?

**Marcia Stemm:** Yes.

**Robert Hopkins:** The figures you submitted were, in fact, results of your accounting, CPA, or...

**Marcia Stemm:** Copies of bills, and (inaudible)

**Robert Hopkins:** The tenants had an opportunity to see this entire package, correct?

**Marcia Stemm:** Yes.

**Robert Hopkins:** We received no rebuttal or objection to the veracity of the figures. Okay, and I think these are copies of the actual bills from the City for sewer tie in and for City water. Do you want to have a discussion? They are requesting an increase of \$30.66 and, which divided by 14 is an increase of \$2.19 a year since the last time they came in before the Board. \$2.19 per month per tenant.

Again, either the owners or the people who live there can bring a petition before us to review the rent whether it should go up or down. So you have had an opportunity to review the materials in terms of the figures that were submitted, the request for increase is based and limited to the following from expenses, water and sewer, the cost of the water and the cost of the sewer usage paid to the Chicopee Water Department is not for any expenses in repairing water or sewer lines. The cost per month per tenant currently is \$36.83 and the amount allowed in 1993 was \$16.16 for an increase of \$20.67. The cost of the real estate taxes paid to the City of Chicopee Tax Collector is \$16.25 per month per tenant, the amount allowed in 1993 was \$11.24 for a difference of \$5.01. Snow plowing and sanding is an average of seven years paid to a sub-contractor for snow plowing and sanding. The cost per month per tenant is \$10.02 according to the submitted figures, the amount allowed in 1993 was \$5.04, their asking for an increase of \$4.98. Those are the three figures that they are asking an increase for. Should we simply look at the increases for this park as submitted by Mobilehome Parks, Inc. Is that fair and reasonable?

**Ronald Lafond:** Yes.

**Sharyn Riley:** Yes, I think so.

**Robert Hopkins:** The Board decided that we will limit our discussion of the increase to the submitted expenses as delineated in the documentation that the amount of expenditures is divided through with the actual figures, we have copies of water bills from the City of Chicopee both for storm water and sewer billing up until November 2007. The real estate tax bills for the year 2008. \$11,991 for one half of the bill which is presented, so I presume that's times two, so \$24,000 for taxes on the parcel and you divided that through here that says it actual costs \$16.25 per month per tenant for taxes.

Should we take them as three separate items? Board?

**Board:** Yes.

**Ronald Lafond:** Break it down separately.

**Robert Hopkins:** Okay, let's look at this in order then. The water and sewer bill the cost per month per tenant is estimated by the figures submitted to \$36.83 per month per tenant for water and sewer which would be \$441.00 per tenant for water and sewer for the year. And again, that is the total divided through by the number of tenants for both water and sewer.

**Marcia Stemm:** We reflected that in our charts also.

**Robert Hopkins:** So that's been averaged in already?

**Marcia Stemm:** Yes.

**Robert Hopkins:** Are you paying any storm water sewer fee at this time?

**Marcia Stemm:** There is a fee for EPA, it's \$25.00 (inaudible).

**Robert Hopkins:** Alright, so we have before us the cost per month per tenant of \$36.83. They're currently allowed \$16.16 according to their figures. They're asking for an increase of 20.67 on the water and sewer increases over the last 14 years, to the 2007 level.

**Sharyn Riley:** I work for the City as the City Auditor and I have worked for the City for 24 years, so I've seen the water rates and the sewer rates, and I've seen them jump up, it's one of those things were, the bills are here...the bills don't lie, they're paying what they say they're paying, so I don't know how to dispute water and sewer bill if we take it separately, it is what it is.

**Ronald Lafond:** Figures don't lie.

**Robert Hopkins:** Alright then, in that case if there's no dispute in the figures, may we make a motion to accept the increase of \$20.67?

**Ronald Lafond:** I make a motion to accept that.

**Sharyn Riley:** I second that motion.

**Robert Hopkins:** Any further discussion on the issue. All in favor?

**Board:** I. Motion passes unanimously.

**Robert Hopkins:** Water and sewer portion is approved.

Real estate taxes, the cost of real estate taxes paid to the City of Chicopee and I presume your assessed value has gone up in the past 14 years for the park. The current division as of 1993 was

\$11.24 per month per tenant, the current cost is \$16.25 per month per tenant and the increase per tenant per month would be \$5.01.

**Sharyn Riley:** Mr. Chairman, I recommend the same course.

**Robert Hopkins:** We have no reason to question the validity of those figures, we have copies of the tax bill, which has gone up. Okay, so you made a motion to accept the figures of the increase of \$5.01 for real estate taxes, okay, second Ron?

**Ronald Lafond:** I second the motion.

**Robert Hopkins:** Discussion? All in favor. So the figure of \$5.01 is deemed an appropriate increase.

Third item: snow plowing and sanding, again, this is an average of seven years paid to a subcontractor the park streets. Currently it is \$5.04, this would be for snow plowing and sanding \$10.00 per month per tenant.

Do you feel it's a reasonable increase over the last 14 years?

**Sharyn Riley:** It sounds to me like a lot of the issues are you're not against paying for something that you get, and I don't disagree, and that's what Bob is trying to say, yes, it's 100% increase but when your talking about the dollar amount, it's not a lot of money, it's more how the person is doing and not that their doing it. We have copies of the invoices that show what is being paid but if someone's doing the job and not doing it properly or appropriately, that's where you have to yell a little louder.

**Tenant:** We are, we're not against the rent increase, but what I'm against is if their going to want more rent for the park then they should at least have the decency to fix up the park, it's a mess. No one is there full time like before. They don't clean up the common areas, we have to rake our own yards.

**Robert Hopkins:** Any further discussion about snow plowing and sanding?

Motion to accept?

**Ronald Lafond:** I make a motion to accept.

**Sharyn Riley:** Second. Motion passes unanimously.

**Robert Hopkins:** Therefore, we have determined that the requested increase is valid and allowable, and again, if either party is aggrieved by the decision, as relates to appropriateness of the rent increase, then you have a right to appeal to the Housing Court. If you have a problem with health issues, you need to call the Health Department, if you have a problem with drainage, you need to bring it to Ms. Stemm.

Any other business pending?

**Board:** No.

Motion to adjourn @ 7:00 p.m.